



News from White Haven

Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site, dedicated to Civil War General and 18th President Ulysses S. Grant and his wife, Julia Dent Grant, is located in south St. Louis County, Missouri.

News from White Haven is a quarterly publication of Ulysses S. Grant NHS. It is also available online by visiting www.nps.gov/ulsg/.

Editorial Staff

Pam Sanfilippo
Abbi Telander

Chief of Interpretation

Arlene Jackson

Superintendent

Timothy S. Good

Contributors

Karen Maxville

Comments? Write to:

Chief of Interpretation
Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site
7400 Grant Road
St. Louis, MO 63123

Telephone

314-842-1867

E-mail

ulsg_interpretation@nps.gov

Park Hours

We are open daily from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m., with tours of White Haven offered from 9:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. Please call ahead for information on special programs and events.

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Letters Take Center Stage in New Video



As part of the filming of a promotional video about the correspondence of Ulysses and Julia Grant, Curator Karen Maxville displays a letter from Ulysses to Julia that was found on site in the 1990s.

In the 19th century, a world without Skype, text or picture messaging, and e-mail, letters were a priceless form of communication. For a couple like Ulysses and Julia Grant, who were often separated by his Army career, letters were absolutely essential. Today, reading those letters gives insight into their relationship. This summer, the Nine Network (St. Louis's local PBS affiliate) and Jefferson National Parks Association debuted a video filmed at Ulysses S. Grant NHS that brings to life the letters of Ulysses and Julia Grant.

“A Thousand Kisses: The Love Story of President Ulysses S.

Grant and Julia Dent Grant” incorporates footage shot on-site with historic photographs and quotes from Ulysses and Julia's writings. It underscores the lifeline that connected the Grants during their periods of separation. Grant frequently asked Julia to remember to write to him often. During the Civil War, he imparted the importance of communication to their children, asking Julia to make sure the two older boys, Fred and Ulysses Jr., wrote weekly to their parents.

This video is available on YouTube (www.youtube.com/user/JeffNatlParks) and will also be available on the Ulysses S. Grant website soon.

Ulysses and Julia Grant: A Love Story of 41 Years

When Lieutenant Ulysses S. Grant returned to St. Louis in the summer of 1848 after the end of the Mexican War, he asked his fiancé of four years when the wedding should be. "I had had four years in which to prepare for this event and therefore required only a week or so to make the last few arrangements," Julia recalled in her memoirs. The date was set: August 22 at 8 p.m.

The wedding was "necessarily a simple one," Julia said, owing to the heat of August in St. Louis and the size of her father's city home (see below). Accounts differ on the guest list and the bridal party (it is often stated that Confederate General James Longstreet, who was a cousin of Julia's and a friend of Grant's, was a groomsman, but Longstreet says he was only a guest). In the words of Julia's youngest sister Emma, "It was just a sweet, old-fashioned home wedding, without ostentation



This 25th anniversary silver service was a gift to the Grants from Julia's father, and is now on display in the Ulysses S. Grant NHS museum.

or any fanfare of trumpets."

As the years passed, Ulysses and Julia spent many of their wedding anniversaries apart due to his military service. In 1873, Ulysses and Julia celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary at the White House. In commemoration of the occasion, Colonel Dent made a gift to the couple of a silver coffee service. This set was engraved with a "G" and the years 1848 and 1873.

In July 1885, Ulysses wrote a final note to his beloved Julia. Unable to speak due to throat

cancer, he ended his last letter to Julia by writing, "[With] the knowledge I have of your love and affection and the dutiful affection of all our children, I bid you a final farewell, until we meet in another and, I trust, better world." He died a month short of their 38th wedding anniversary.

Their youngest son, Jesse, later reflected on the love shared by his parents: "Whatever the storm and stress, the anxieties and disappointments, they knew happiness... nothing but abiding faith and love in full content in each other."

Colonel Frederick Dent's City Home

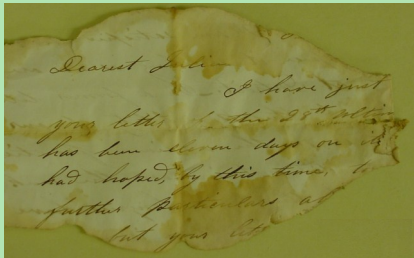
Colonel Frederick Dent's St. Louis home was located on the southwest corner of Fourth and Cerre Streets near today's Busch Stadium. It was a row house in a neighborhood of many similar homes. Despite efforts to preserve it and move it to the grounds of the proposed Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, the home was demolished in 1940 after being left derelict during

the Great Depression. Today, the only remaining home in the area is the Eugene Field House and St. Louis Toy Museum, located at 634 S. Broadway. The Field home, owned by Dred Scott lawyer Roswell Field, had a similar layout to the Dent's home. This mid-20th century photograph of the Dents' home is in the collection of the Missouri History Museum.



Spotlight on the Park: Letter in the Window

One of the major insights into the relationship of Ulysses and Julia Grant is the letters from her husband that Julia saved. In 1998, a previously unknown letter from Ulysses to Julia was discovered at White Haven, tucked away for over 140



This letter from Ulysses to Julia was discovered in the historic home.

years between a window frame and the wall. The letter was badly damaged: tears and water stains make much of the letter unreadable. What is legible after “Dearest Julia” reveals that Grant is writing in response to a letter he received from his wife, likely while he was stationed in Detroit. He mentions the city, the wives of men he was stationed with there, and the possibility of reassignment. These clues likely put the letter in June 1850, during the time when Julia had returned to White Haven to give birth to their first son, Fred, in May 1850. While the entire contents of the letter are a mystery, this is one of many letters to Grant’s “Dearest Julia” that kept them close across distance.

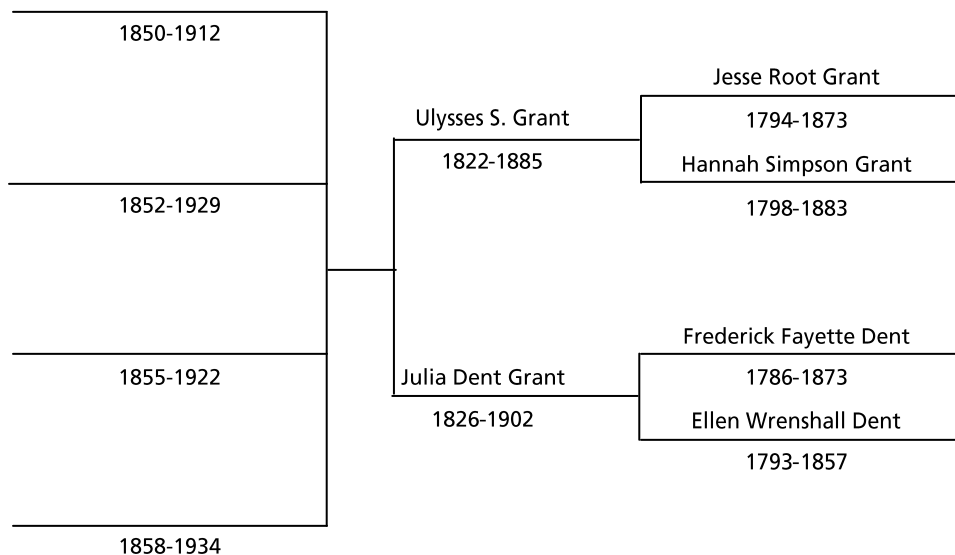
Meet the Staff: Newsbites and Updates

- We have many new volunteers, including Josh Milburg, who volunteers on the weekend in interpretation, and Robert Atkins, who has been volunteering this summer in maintenance.
- Historian Pam Sanfilippo was selected to spend a week in July in training with the Gilder-Lehrman Institute at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.
- Jean Freeman-Crawford, who started at the park in interpretation but now is our part-time safety officer, welcomed twins, Patrick and Lily, in May.
- Park Guide David Newmann now also works two days a week as the weekend manager at the Campbell House Museum in downtown St. Louis.
- Superintendent Tim Good is spending the summer in a temporary assignment as acting superintendent at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore on the south shore of Lake Superior in Michigan’s famous Upper Peninsula.

Kids’ Corner: Finding Family Trees

Family trees are charts that help you map out family connections. They show a person’s grandparents and parents, and their children and grandchildren, when family members were born and when they died. If you trace Ulysses S. Grant’s family tree, you can find his relations back to his first relatives in the United

States who came to Massachusetts in 1630, and you can find the descendants of his daughter Nellie, who live in France today. To help you keep track of the Grant family, you can use the information in the articles in this issue of the newsletter to fill in the blanks of this family tree.





Ulysses S. Grant NHS
7400 Grant Road
St. Louis, MO 63123
(314) 842-1867

Upcoming Events

- August 20: Writer Joanne Hardy. [The Girl in the Butternut Dress](#) and Civil War Illinois, 7 p.m.
- August 27: Writer Richard H. McBee. [Rough Enough](#) and the Civil War soldier experience, 7 p.m.
- September 7: Kathryn M. Harris as Harriet Tubman, 1 p.m.
- September 20-21: An Evening at White Haven, 6:30 p.m. Join living history characters and park rangers for a discussion of the Civil War and the politics of emancipation.
- October 5: Fritz Klein as Abraham Lincoln and Larry Werline as Ulysses Grant, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.
- October 12: Annual Grant Lecture and John Y. Simon Day with speaker William C. “Jack” Davis, Director of Programs at the Virginia Center for Civil War Studies, 10 a.m. \$10 reservation fee.

Call the Ulysses S. Grant NHS visitor center at 314-842-1867 x230 for reservations for these programs.

Did you know?

Although President Ulysses S. Grant signed the legislation creating the first National Park in 1872, the National Park Service was not in place to preserve and interpret the parks until 1916. Congress passed the National Park Service Organic Act that year and

President Woodrow Wilson signed the act into law on August 25, 1916. This act created the NPS as an agency of the Department of the Interior, which unified the administration of the parks. Before the Organic Act, parks were cared for by the War Department or the Forest

Service. Park boosters started the discussion about an agency to oversee the parks in the early twentieth century. The effort to bring these ideas to fruition by law was led by the man who would become the NPS's first director, industrialist Stephen T. Mather.